

Out of Control

By

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FADE IN:

INT. PULSE NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Party music echoes throughout a dimly lit room as a crowd of women dance in celebration of a Bachelorette party.

STACEY BAKER(24) and TONYA RUSSEL(25) approach the bar where a handsome BARTENDER (20s) awaits their requests. Stacey, the bride to be, is dressed in her chicest party ensemble, while her cousin, Tonya, hasn't bothered to change out of her reserved rehearsal dinner suit.

STACEY
(to Bartender)
I'll have a tall Cran and Vodka,
straight up.

TONYA
(to Bartender)
A Virgin Daiquiri for me.

Tonya gives Stacey a condescending look.

STACEY
What?

TONYA
You really want to drink that the
night before your wedding, Stacey?

STACEY
(definite)
Of course! It's the night before my
wedding, just like you said!
Besides, I'll only have one or two,
Tonya.

Tonya looks out at Stacey's friends cutting loose on the dance floor.

TONYA
I can't believe we rushed through
your rehearsal for this...

STACEY
Well how many people do you know
doing their Rehearsal, Rehearsal
Dinner and Bachelorette Party all
in the same night? It's not like I
made Felicia host this thing.

TONYA
 (slight disbelief)
 Hmph.

STACEY
 Thanks for flying in by the way.

TONYA
 You know I would never miss your
 big day.
 (chuckling)
 You've only been planning for this
 your whole life!

STACEY
 Whatever! Not my whole life...Just
 since high school... Okay, maybe
 junior high school!
 (giggles)

TONYA
 (chuckles, shaking head)

STACEY
 (nudging Tonya)
 So tell me cousin, how do you like
 everything so far?

TONYA
 It's been pretty good. The colors
 are nice, your dress is gorgeous--

STACEY
 I know, right?!

TONYA
 --and the wedding rehearsal was so
 touching. Although I had to hold in
 my laughter when the Pastor said,
 (deep voice)
 "Ladies and Gentlemen, I now
 present to you, Mr. Bryon Baker and
 Mrs. Stacey Monroe-Baker!" It
 sounds almost absurd.
 (giggles)

STACEY
 It's no more absurd than removing
 my name altogether. My name isn't
 Mrs. Bryon Baker and I don't want
 to be introduced that way for the
 first time as his wife. Bryon
 understands that, why can't you?

BARTENDER
(returning)
Here you are ladies.

TONYA
Thanks.

STACEY
Thank You.
(sips)
Mmm, it's been so long since I had
one of these!
(takes another sip)
Oh! Tonya! I wish you could see our
new house before you go! It's
seriously our dream home.

TONYA
I wish I could see it too. What
does it look like?

STACEY
It's perfect. It has 3 bedrooms, 2
and a half baths, a huge kitchen
and this giant porch that wraps
around the back.
(chuckles)
It'll be nice to have a place to
get away when Bryon and the kids
are getting on my nerves.

TONYA
(suspicious)
Kids?

STACEY
(nonchalant)
Well, I mean one day. I'm sure
we'll eventually have our 2.5...

TONYA
You never did tell me your decision
after I sent you that email on
birth control.

STACEY
I told you I'd think about it, and
I did. Then I went and got my
prescription filled...

TONYA
(sighs)
Stacey....

STACEY

Sorry Tonya, not every woman is up to having millions of babies like you...

(sips)

TONYA

You can't tell me that you're seriously doing this, after hearing the ways that those pills can work--

STACEY

(exasperated)

Tonya, I know it gives my eggs a time out and blocks sperm.

(shrugs)

Just like a condom would.

TONYA

And if the first two don't work, it kills the baby.

STACEY

(chuckles)

Yeah, before it attaches to the uterus. I don't know if that really can be considered murder, Tonya.

TONYA

Are you serious, Stacey? What if your mom had been taking birth control when you were conceived?

Stacey glares at Tonya.

STACEY

(offended)

Then it probably would've saved both of us a lot of trouble in the long run.

Tonya is silent, feeling that she's crossed her boundaries a bit.

STACEY

Look, I don't want to talk about this at my Bachelorette party. And I don't need your religious beliefs putting a damper on my fun tonight...or the first year of my marriage for that matter...

(sips drink)

TONYA

I'm not trying to stop you from having fun, Stace. I just don't want your plans to get in the way of God's plan for your life, or the future of your children.

STACEY

(frustrated)

Tonya! I believe that God wants me to be happy! I spent years pouring over books to get my business degree, and to graduate Magna Cum Laude. I work really hard for every dime I have, I've worked even harder to keep my body in shape and the amount of time and effort that's gone into my relationship with Bryon has exceeded even my own greatest expectations. I'm not going to mess it all up with a kid right now. So just drop it!

Tonya drops the conversation, looking down at her drink.

STACEY

I'm gonna go dance...
(walks away)

INT. HONEYMOON SUITE - DAY

2 days later. The sun peers through the window, waking Stacey and her newlywed husband, BRYON BAKER (25), from a peaceful slumber in their cushy King-sized bed.

BRYON

(groggy)

Good morning, Mrs. Baker...

STACEY

(giggling)

That's Mrs. Monroe-Baker to you...

BRYON

(sighs, joking)

My apologies, I thought that somehow that would be romantic.

STACEY

(chuckles)

You sleep well?

BRYON
Like a baby...

STACEY
Hmph...

Bryon's typically lame analogy sparks Stacey's remembrance of her prior argument with Tonya, and also her birth control pills.

STACEY
Bryon?

BRYON
Yeah?

STACEY
What time is it?

Bryon rolls over and looks at the clock on the night table.

BRYON
A little after 8.

STACEY
Oh!

Stacey attempts to jump out of the bed, but Bryon holds her back

BRYON
(confused)
Hey! Hey! What's your rush?

STACEY
(nervous)
I usually take my pill at 7. I
don't wanna mess up my schedule.

BRYON
(cuddling, flirtatious)
Who cares? I wouldn't mind getting
an early start on children anyway.
(joking)
No one wants a father old enough to
be their grandpa, right?

STACEY
(angry, frustrated, yells)
Bryon, stop!

BRYON
 (shocked)
 Okay.

Confused by Stacey's abrupt behavior, Bryon surrenders his arms.

BRYON
 Sorry.

Stacey rushes into the hotel bathroom, slamming the door behind her. Bryon lays back into the bed in contemplation.

BRYON
 (sighs, sarcastic)
 This is definitely turning out to
 be a romantic honeymoon...

INT. BAKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

6 months later. A soft whistle blows through the window of a finely decorated wall of paintings and decor. Stacey sits at the computer clicking through pictures as Bryon prepares for work in their master bathroom.

STACEY
 (to self)
 I can't believe how addictive
 Facebook is....

Stacey clicks around for a moment on a "Recent Updates" page before stopping at a picture of Tonya.

STACEY
 Hmph, Tonya uploaded pictures? I
 didn't think she was interested in
 this sort of thing. She hates *all*
 fun.

Stacey clicks on the photo to enlarge it.

STACEY
 Wait...is she?

Stacey clicks again to go to Tonya's profile page.

STACEY
 (reads)
 "Baby Number Four is on it's way,
 due in May?"
 (laughs in disgust)
 Unbelievable!

Bryon enters the bedroom half dressed for work.

BRYON
What's so funny?

STACEY
I was checking out Tonya's Facebook page. She's about to have her fourth kid.

BRYON
Wow! That's great.

STACEY
Great? Bryon, that's awful. This woman acts like she's vowed to have no purpose but to be
(imitating fairytale princess voice)
"barefoot and pregnant all the days of her life"!

BRYON
(chuckles)
Stacey, there's nothing wrong with having children.

STACEY
(scoffs, shaking head)

Bryon continues to prepare for work. Stacey clicks around again typing as the wind continues to whistle through the window.

STACEY
That stupid window is still howling...

BRYON
I'll try to fix it when I get home from work.

STACEY
(doubtful)
I'm sure I'll get to it before then. Besides, I don't want you breaking anything...

BRYON
Look, I took a job in banking so I could actually be home for this sort of thing. Would you rather I go work for my dad's construction company?

STACEY
(snide, joking)
If you did, you'd know how to fix
this window...

Bryon stops to glare at Stacey.

BRYON
(sarcastic)
Ha ha, very funny.

Stacey logs on to her email account.

STACEY
I'm just hearing this and she's 5
months pregnant. I should've known
that's why she kept sending all
those emails...

BRYON
Well, if you read them, or answered
any of her calls over the last 6
months you wouldn't have had to
hear the news through Facebook.

STACEY
Listen to this...
(reading)
"Hey cousin, I'm not sure if you've
been reading these emails, but
hopefully by now you've heard of
our big news. I miss talking to
you, especially on the weekends. I
used to be able to tell you
everything about my gripes with
Greg and the kids. I guess that's
why I still shoot out these
emails..."

(contemplative)
Anyway, I have great news, we found
out the sex of the baby and... It's
a boy...Our first baby boy..."

BRYON
Okay, now I don't care what you
say, Greg has to be excited about
that.

Stacey logs off the computer, attempting to be casual
regarding her estranged cousin's special news and almost
humiliating kindness.

STACEY

There's no way they can pay for 4 kids on his salary alone.

BRYON

(shrugs)

They're making it with three.

STACEY

Barely!

BRYON

And my parents barely made it with 7 of us. But they made it.

STACEY

Things were way cheaper when you were growing up.

BRYON

(chuckles)

Yeah, okay, tell that to my dad.

STACEY

Look, it's not my business how many kids anyone has, but people should really be more responsible. They risk neglecting both their children and themselves with all this... over-crowding.

BRYON

(chuckles)

We're not talking about chicken farms, Stacey.

STACEY

So you agree with this nonsense they're up to? Trying to overpopulate the earth like some... strange cult?

BRYON

I don't really have an opinion. However, I have 3 brothers and 3 sisters who would completely disagree with you.

STACEY

So you're saying this is right?

BRYON

I'm just saying that Greg must be excited to be having a son. I know I would be...

STACEY

(frustrated)

Oh no you don't! You can't do that, Bryon!

BRYON

(nonchalant)

Do what?

STACEY

Don't you dare try to make me feel guilty about the decision that *we both* came to when it comes to waiting.

BRYON

(shrugs)

You're the one who was so adamant about it. I'm just saying that if we had a child right now, I wouldn't necessarily mind...

STACEY

(angry)

I can't believe you! We--*both of us*--agreed to this! And here I am, busting my butt on the treadmill 5 days a week just to keep off half the extra weight these pills keep trying to add to my hips. And now you have the *nerve* to tell me you wouldn't necessarily mind?

BRYON

Oh come on, you're the one who's always saying

(imitating Stacey)

"I absolutely cannot have a baby right now!"

STACEY

And I can't! We're struggling with this massive mortgage and Heaven forbid you lose your job or something and all we have to depend on is my online business.

BRYON

I would never do that to you,
Stacey. I'd work day and night if I
had to.

STACEY

Yeah, and never see your kids. How
wonderful would that be?

BRYON

Stacey, I didn't mean that--

STACEY

I don't care what you meant! What
good does it do to bring a kid into
this world when you don't have the
time or the resources to take care
of them?

Bryon suddenly recalls the broken childhood Stacey's
reported to him in the past. A tale of abandonment and
cruelty.

BRYON

(cautious)

Stacey... You're not your mother.

STACEY

(almost broken)

And I'm never going to be! I've
worked way too hard to throw my
plans away over what seems like a
good idea. The only good idea my
mom ever had was to get her tubes
tied...

Seeing how worked up Stacey has become over the topic, Bryon
decides to back down.

BRYON

(sighs)

Look, let's just forget it. You're
right about the money. We can't
afford a kid right now... I don't
know what I was thinking. I'm
sorry.

Stacey approaches Bryon and hugs him. He caresses her in an
attempt to convince her of his sincerity.

STACEY

It's okay. We all lose sight
of our goals sometimes. Don't

worry, in a year or two, I'm
sure we'll be ready to start
trying... Just not now.

BRYON

Yeah...

INT. BAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

3 months later. An exhausted Stacey sits at the breakfast
bar, while Bryon places dishes in the dishwasher.

STACEY

Thanks hon... I'm just so tired...

BRYON

It's no problem Stace--

Bryon turns on the dishwasher and the lights flicker
throughout the house.

BRYON

We really should call an
electrician.

STACEY

(waves hand)

No, no, just let me Google it
first.

Bryon looks at Stacey with condescension.

STACEY

(justifying)

It could save us a lot of money.
It's been tight enough around here
since you lost your job. The more
we can save, the better.

BRYON

(wiping down the counters)

If you say so...

STACEY

Speaking of money, I've been
thinking... Maybe you should ask
your dad for a job.

BRYON

(offended)

Are you kidding me? When I chose to
study Finance, it was like a slap

(MORE)

BRYON (cont'd)
in his face. I can't go to him with
my tail between my legs now. You
know him; he'll make me start at
the bottom.

STACEY
(shrugs)
You don't know that. Besides, I can
only do so much. Business is slow
right now.

BRYON
I know. And I'm job hunting
everyday.

Stacey looks doubtful of Bryon's words, but doesn't press
the issue. The phone rings.

BRYON
(looking at Caller ID)
It's Tonya.

STACEY
(rolls her eyes)
Let it go to voicemail.

BRYON
Stace, it's been 9 months since our
wedding. Don't you think you should
give her a break?

STACEY
(shrugs)
I just don't feel up to it right
now, that's all.

BRYON
(chuckles)
I remember how you used to be
exhausted on our dates after the
two of you stayed up until 3 in the
morning talking about me on the
phone.

STACEY
Yeah well, things change. People
grow apart.

The dishwasher switches cycles and the lights flicker again.
Bryon and Stacey look at each other prepared for a
challenge.

BRYON
If your Google methods don't work,
we're calling an electrician.

STACEY
(condescending)
And pay them with what money?

BRYON
(chuckles)
Maybe if you stop running up our
credit cards we can save up for
maintenance repairs like this.

STACEY
(looks angry, snide)
And if you got a job--
(looks uncomfortable, about to
vomit)
I think I'm gonna be sick.

Stacey runs into the bathroom, slamming the door behind her.

BRYON
(calling out)
Honey? Honey, are you okay?

INT. BAKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

1 week later. A cooking timer ticks on the bathroom counter. A nervous Stacey and Bryon sit at the edge of the bed waiting impatiently. The annoying window whistles. Stacey stands and goes over to the window to attempt silencing it. She studies the window for a moment.

STACEY
(finding a solution)
Ahh! Aha!

Stacey adjusts the window and it momentarily stops whistling, only to begin whistling again.

STACEY
Ugh!

Stacey kicks the wall in anger, stubbing her toe in the process.

STACEY
Ow!

BRYON
(standing)
Will you calm down?

STACEY
(frustrated)
I'm sick of everything in this
stupid house falling apart. The
mortgage is way too high for us to
be dealing with this garbage!

BRYON
(irritated)
Stacey, just sit down. You
shouldn't be putting this kind of
stress on your body--

STACEY
(angry)
Don't tell me what to do, Bryon.
I'm not a child.

BRYON
(defensive)
It's my responsibility to take care
of you--

STACEY
(sarcastic)
And we see what a fine job you've
done with that.

The timer dings. Bryon and Stacey stand still for a moment,
not looking at each other. Stacey walks into the bathroom
momentarily, and comes back out. Bryon stares at Stacey
waiting for an answer.

STACEY
It's positive.

BRYON
Does that mean...

STACEY
(nods)
Pregnant.

Bryon sits on the bed attempting to absorb their new fate.

STACEY
I'm so stupid. That's the first
time I was late picking up my
refill. I only went 2 days without
the stupid thing.

BRYON
(in disbelief)
You went *two days* without taking
birth control?

STACEY
Bryon, you don't get the right to
be upset about this, okay? *My body*
is the one that could be destroyed
here! *I'm* the one who could lose
more business than I already have!
I'm the one who'd be tied to a
stroller... if we can even afford
one.

BRYON
(angry)
Are you kidding me? We're about to
bring a child into this world
which, thanks to my incompetence, I
can't afford to take care of like a
decent human being. How do you
think that makes me feel?!

Stacey is shocked into silence by Bryon's anger. Bryon
continues to think and begins to realize the anger and fear
they feel over the child they've created.

BRYON
(sighs)
This should be one of the happiest
days of our lives...

INT. BAKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Later that night. Stacey sits at her computer checking her
email. The window continues to taunt her with a low
whistle. She has an email.

STACEY
(to self)
I can't believe Tonya keeps
emailing me. You'd think that she
would take a hint...
(clicks around, reads)
"Hey Stace, I could barely wait to
update you on what's been going on.
I had Greg bring my laptop to the
hospital so I could tell you our
big news..."

TONYA (V.O.)

Hey Stace, I could barely wait to update you on what's been going on. I had Greg bring my laptop to the hospital so I could tell you our big news. Our son, Gregory Solomon Russel Jr. was born last night at 2:37 am. He was a couple weeks early. But he's strong and he'll be just fine... I'm just so thankful for how the Lord's blessed us once again. I'm hoping to hear from you again soon. Any updates??? Love, Tonya...

STACEY

(reading)

"...I'm hoping to hear from you again soon. Any updates??? Love, Tonya..."

Stacey sits for a moment, the cursor hovering over the Delete button on screen. Instead, she decides to click Reply.

STACEY

(unsure of her words)

"Hey Tonya, congrats on your new addition... It sounds like he'll be a lot like his father..."

(more confident)

It turns out that, against all odds, Bryon and I are expecting... The timing is all wrong honestly. Bryon got laid off a couple months ago and hasn't found anything else yet. And business is slow enough as it is for me... I've been thinking, and I know why I'm so terrified of having a kid before I'm ready.

FLASHBACK

INT. WILLIAMS HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

8 years ago. Teenage Tonya (17) welcomes teenage Stacey (16) to their home as THE WILLIAMS FAMILY, Tonya's mother, MRS. WILLIAMS(43), father, MR. WILLIAMS(47) and 2 younger BROTHERS(13) and (8) look on. Stacey's luggage is at the door.

STACEY (V.O.)
 I'd spent so many years raising
 myself, that by the time I came to
 stay with your family at 16, I
 didn't know how to let anyone else
 be in charge.
 (continued)

INT. MONROE APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

17 years ago. A filthy counter and floor. Stacey as a
 child (7), innocent and lonely, stands in front of a dingy
 microwave, looking hungry, awaiting her meal.

STACEY (V.O., CONT'D)
 I remember microwaving Ramen
 noodles when I was 7...
 (continued)

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Cars drive by, throwing up litter from the streets. An
 angry couple shouts at each other as little Stacey walks by,
 her eyes on the ground.

STACEY (V.O., CONT'D)
 ...and walking 10 blocks to school
 at 9, while the woman I called my
 mother was out taking the train
 nearly 2 hours to work 5 days a
 week one way, and 4 nights a week
 the other.
 (continued)

INT. MONROE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

10 years ago. The carpet littered with laundry and alcohol
 bottles. Stacey's mother, MRS. MONROE (30s), pulls the
 LANDLORD (50s) into her bedroom and shuts the door. Teenage
 Stacey(14) looks up from her school books in disgust.

STACEY (V.O., CONT'D)
 Even when she came home, she was
 either too wasted or busy catching
 up the rent with sex to talk to me.
 I felt so disconnected from her
 that I barely felt a thing when she
 died...
 (continued)

BACK TO

INT. BAKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

STACEY (V.O., CONT'D)
 So when I think about the type of person I've become, and knowing the millions of things a person could do to screw up a kid's life, this whole idea of taking care of someone besides myself just, horrifies me.

FLASHBACK

INT. WILLIAMS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

8 years ago. A shiny, clean kitchen. Warm, fresh-baked cookies sit next to the stove. Mrs. Williams, Tonya's mother, serves a warm meal to the family, as a jealous teenage Stacey looks on.

STACEY (V.O.)
 Living with you and your parents, I saw that there was a better way to live life, and I wanted that.

BACK TO

INT. BAKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

STACEY (V.O., CONT'D)
 That's why I had to move away after I graduated. I had to go to the best college I could get into and change my life around. I'm just barely reaching my goals, and the last thing I'm prepared for right now, is a kid. But then I think about the question you asked me that night at my Bachelorette Party:

FLASHBACK

INT. PULSE NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Previous scene of Tonya asking Stacey about the birth control.

STACEY
What if my mom had taken Birth
Control the night I was conceived?
(continued)

INT. BAKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON Stacey and Bryon cuddling on the bed.

STACEY (V.O., CONT'D)
I never would've been born either.
And I never would've achieved the
things I have so far... If my
mother, in all her selfishness, had
gotten rid of me, I would never
have experienced the few joys I've
had...

BACK TO

INT. BAKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

STACEY
So, I'm sure you'll be glad to hear
that I'm going to have this baby.
Besides, if it's healthy and
strong, that's still considered a
blessing, right? Talk to you later,
Stacey."

INT. BAKER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Later in the week. We see Stacey and Bryon sitting watching
TV while Bryon gives Stacey a shoulder rub. He attempts to
suggest baby names.

BRYON
Jackson.

STACEY
Yuck. I never liked that name.
Unless it has Michael in front of
it, no thanks.

BRYON
Ashley?

STACEY
That's so typical, and what if it's
a boy?

BRYON
We could always name him after me.

STACEY
It's hard enough keeping up with
one of you.

BRYON
(ignoring Stacey's jokes)
Hey, did you ever call the doctor
about setting up an appointment?

STACEY
Yeah, they want me to wait like 4
weeks before I come in. What kind
of sense does that make?

BRYON
(confused)
Well how will they know if the
baby's okay?

STACEY
That's what I asked. They said
something about not being able to
tell much in the beginning.

The phone rings. Bryon looks at the Caller ID.

BRYON
It's Tonya.

Stacey rolls her eyes. The TV cable suddenly cuts out.

STACEY
(annoyed, groans)
Oh... Are you kidding me?

Stacey crosses the room to attempt to fix the television.

STACEY
(angry)
The lights blink every time we turn
on the dishwasher. And that window
upstairs is driving me batty. I'm
really starting to think that this
place isn't worth the trouble.

Stacey begins to move the television.

BRYON
(standing, concerned)
Hey! Hey! Take it easy.

STACEY
(sarcastic)
The hard parts over, papa.

Stacey leans down to look at the cable wires.

BRYON
I don't want you getting hurt.

STACEY
Calm down, I'm just resetting the
cable box.

BRYON
(calming down)
I think you should talk to Tonya.
Maybe she can help us understand
some of this baby stuff.

STACEY
I did talk to her, by email. And
that's how she should respond.

Stacey stands and looks at Bryon whom is giving her a
critical gaze.

STACEY
(justifying)
I'm just not ready to talk by phone
yet.

Stacey and Bryon sit and stare at a blank TV screen in
silence.

INT. BAKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stacey sits at the computer checking her email before bed.
The whistling window continues to whistle.

STACEY
(reading)
"Dear Stacey, I was hoping that
based on your email that you would
be ready to talk by phone. But any
word from you is better than
nothing at all..."

TONYA (V.O.)
"Dear Stacey, I was hoping that
based on your email that you would
be ready to talk by phone. But any
word from you is better than
(MORE)

TONYA (V.O.) (cont'd)
 nothing at all... Anyway, I wanted
 to congratulate you! There's no
 greater blessing than to be chosen
 as a vessel to bring a life into
 this world. I know that you might
 not understand all that right now
 ,but when you're a mom, you'll see
 what I mean. I know you told me
 before that you had your plans and
 you were hoping that things would
 go in a certain way, but please
 know that all things happen for a
 reason. God will never put more on
 you than you can bear. You'll see,
 in spite of everything you've been
 through, you'll be a wonderful mom.
 And, I know you might not feel up
 to talking right now ,but if you
 ever need anything, I'm just a
 phone call away...

(continued)

SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. RUSSEL HOUSE - NURSERY

The sun shines through a nursery window over a crib. Tonya
 rocks JR. (1 month old) in her arms.

TONYA (V.O., CONT'D)
 You know, we brought Jr. home. He
 barely ever cries, which is nice!
 And he's small enough to actually
 fit some of those newborn onesies.
 But sometimes, when I'm holding
 him, he'll look right into my eyes.
 And I'll start to wonder, how can
 he trust me so much? And how can
 God trust me with this little guy's
 life, knowing my imperfections?

(continued)

INT. RUSSEL HOUSE - OFFICE

A desk is covered in scrap paper and writing
 utensils. Tonya frantically searches for something.

TONYA (V.O., CONT'D)
 I'm one of the worst candidates to
 raise a human being. I'm horribly

(MORE)

TONYA (V.O., CONT'D) (cont'd)
unorganized. You remember, I can
never find anything on my desk.

INT. RUSSEL HOUSE - KITCHEN

A burned meal sits on the table in front of the twisted up faces of 2 of Tonya's DAUGHTERS (7 and 9). Tonya's husband, GREG (30), has a charcoal meal in front of him too. All of their faces look less than pleased.

TONYA (V.O., CONT'D)
I'll cook a meal that no one likes,
not even my husband.
(continued)

INT. RUSSEL HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

A panning shot of a wall. One side is clean, where an exhausted Tonya is scrubbing and as we pull out, one of her children doodles on the other end.

TONYA (V.O., CONT'D)
Or I'll spend 2 hours scrubbing the
walls only for one of my children
to make it their canvas within 20
minutes.

A distraught Tonya discovers her child's artwork and appears frustrated.

INT. RUSSEL HOUSE - OFFICE

Tonya stands amongst her piles of paper and her oldest daughter comes in and hugs her.

TONYA (V.O.)
Sometimes, I look around and think
the few things I do are not even
worth it. But then, one of my girls
will come and wrap her arms around
me,

INT. RUSSEL HOUSE - NURSERY

Tonya cuddles Jr. on her shoulder.

TONYA (V.O., CONT'D)
 Or Jr. rests his head on my
 shoulder and I think: these kids
 are my purpose. And as long as I'm
 doing my absolute best to take care
 of them and raise them to be strong
 Christian Believers, I'm doing what
 I came here to do, I'm fulfilling
 part of God's plan for my life. And
 with just that thought, all of my
 desires begin to melt away...

BACK TO

INT. BAKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

TONYA (V.O.)
 Hmph, anyway, I hope I didn't bore
 you too much with my rambling... I
 miss you, Stacey. Be blessed. Love,
 Tonya..."

STACEY
 (reading)
 "Anyway, I hope I didn't bore you
 too much with my rambling... I miss
 you, Stacey. Be blessed. Love,
 Tonya..."

A groggy Bryon sits up in the bed behind Stacey.

BRYON
 (sleepy)
 You comin' to bed, babe?

STACEY
 (being pulled away from her
 thoughts)
 Yeah.

Stacey turns off the computer and heads to bed.

INT. BAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Stacey sits at the breakfast bar typing on her laptop.

STACEY
 (to self)
 I hope Bryon aces this interview
 today. I could use a break.

The doorbell rings. Stacey walks to the door to answer it.

INT. BAKER HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

An ELECTRICIAN (20s) is at the door.

STACEY
(confused)
Yes?

ELECTRICIAN
You called for an electrician,
ma'am?

STACEY
(defensive, crosses arms)
No, I didn't.

ELECTRICIAN
(looks at work order)
I have an appointment here about
your dishwasher and lights, made by
Bryon Baker. Does he live here?

STACEY
Yes, that's my husband, but I--

Stacey looks at the electrician a moment, then realizes he's not interested in her opinion. Stacey decides to let him in.

STACEY
Never mind, I'll show you the
kitchen.

INT. BAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The electrician follows Stacey into the kitchen.

STACEY
The dishwasher's right over there.
Every time it changes cycle, the
lights blink.

ELECTRICIAN
(approaching dishwasher)
Gotcha. This should only take a few
minutes.

Stacey sits and looks at her laptop. An ad banner for baby cribs has appeared on the screen. She appears to reflect on something, then decides to email Tonya back.

STACEY (V.O.)

"Hey Tonya, thanks for your email. It really gave me a lot to think about. Maybe too much even. I was trying to Google the types of freaky dreams that get to women when they're pregnant and I just couldn't find an answer. So maybe you can help me out. I had this really vivid dream last night..."

FLASHBACK

INT. DARK ROOM - NIGHT

A dream sequence. Stacey stands in a dark room confused and alone.

STACEY (V.O., CONT'D)

" I'm standing in this dark room and all of a sudden, I hear this baby crying. I look all around me, but I don't see anything. Then finally, I turn around, and there's this mirror. And behind my reflection in the mirror, I can see a crib. But when I turn around, the crib isn't there. I have no choice, but to step through the mirror... So I did. I could finally approach the crib. "

(continued)

Stacey slowly approaches the crib in dream sequence. Suspense builds as she leans over the crib, afraid of what she might see. Stacey is relieved when she sees the innocent baby crying.

STACEY (V.O., CONT'D)

"It was the most beautiful baby I had ever seen. And somehow, I knew that he was mine. So I picked him up, and tried to soothe him, but he just kept crying. No matter what I did, he would not stop. Suddenly, the cries got louder. And then it sounded like several cries.

(continued)

Stacey looks at the room, now surrounded by mirrors.

STACEY (V.O., CONT'D)
I looked around me and was
surrounded by mirrors, the
reflection of a crib in each one.
And the cries just got louder and
louder."

BACK TO

INT. BAKER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

STACEY (V.O.)
"What does something like that
mean? Did you ever have crazy
dreams like that? -Stacey"

The electrician turns on the dishwasher and the lights don't
blink.

ELECTRICIAN
Alright, that was an easy fix. It's
gonna be \$55.

Annoyed, Stacey sends the email.

STACEY
(defeated)
I'll go get my purse.

Stacey stands to get her purse and makes it to the foyer.
Suddenly a sharp pain shoots through her back.

STACEY
(gasps, in severe pain)
Ow!

ELECTRICIAN
You okay, Ma'am?

The pain strikes again.

STACEY
(groans in pain)
Ohhhh!
(gasps)

Pain shoots up through her legs and Stacey falls to the
floor in pain. The electrician runs over to help Stacey.

ELECTRICIAN
Ma'am?! Ma'am?!

EXT. BAKER HOUSE - BACK PORCH - DAY

1 week later. Stacey sits in grief on the back porch, looking out into a garden void of flowers. Bryon enters and walks up behind her. He's upset, but wants to console his wife.

BRYON
(reluctant)
Maybe we should go out to dinner
tonight.

Stacy doesn't reply.

BRYON
A movie?

Stacey still doesn't have anything to say.

BRYON
You can't shut me out like this
Stacey, it's not fair--

STACEY
(icy)
You have the nerve to try and make
this about you?

Stacey stands, turns and glares at Bryon.

STACEY
(angry)
Do you have any idea what I've been
through this week? Do you have any
idea how I must be feeling?

BRYON
(angry, yelling)
I understand that it's hard on you!
But I have a right to be upset too!
...That was my child too!

Stacey is silenced by Bryon's anger. She looks away from Bryon with tears in her eyes.

BRYON
(calming down)
Don't assume that I don't care,
just because I choose to be strong
for this family. *Our* family.

Stacey begins to feel guilty for snapping at Bryon.

BRYON

Now, I may not have wanted it in our situation, But I wanted that baby. You're always so concerned about how you feel. Don't you see the roller coaster ride I've been through? Not having something that I want, having it for a moment and then having it ripped away again?

STACEY

(in tears)

Of course I know how that feels! My whole life has been that way!

BRYON

(shakes his head, bitter)

The way you've acted this whole time, I'm surprised that you're not happier with the outcome.

Bryon leaves Stacey standing on the porch alone.

INT. BAKER HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Moments later. The doorbell in the foyer rings. Bryon answers the door and it's Tonya. Bryon is still writhing from the disagreement with Stacey and doesn't feel up to being hospitable.

BRYON

(surprised, confused)

Tonya?

TONYA

(nervous, unprepared)

Hey...

BRYON

When did you get in town?

TONYA

About an hour ago.

Bryon looks at Tonya waiting for more of an explanation.

TONYA

I need to talk to Stacey.

BRYON

(a little annoyed)

You could've called first.

TONYA

I did.

Tonya lets herself in, walking past an unprepared Bryon.

BRYON

Right...

(matter of fact, believing)

Of course you did.

(exhausted)

She's out on the back porch. I'll show you.

Tonya follows behind Bryon looking around.

TONYA

Thanks. This is a nice house.

BRYON

Thanks. It could use some work, but it's home.

INT. BAKER HOUSE - BACK PORCH - DAY

Moments later. Stacey is still out on the back porch in depression. She's sitting again. Bryon directs Tonya out to the porch. Hearing the footsteps, Stacey thinks that it's Bryon returning.

STACEY

(upset)

Look, we really don't have to talk about this. I mean, I can barely stand being in my own skin right now...

Stacey turns and sees Tonya. She attempts to somewhat pull herself together.

STACEY

Tonya. I didn't know you were flying in.

TONYA

I tried to give you a head's up, but I guess you didn't get that email. I called too.

Tonya stops to observe the hurt in Stacey's face.

TONYA

It seems as if my timing couldn't
be worse though... Is everything
okay with the baby?

Stacey looks off with bitter tears in her eyes. Without
words, Tonya realizes the tragedy that has occurred.

TONYA

(sympathizing with Stacey's
pain, groans)

Oh...Oh no...Honey, I'm so sorry...

Tonya walks over to Stacey and embraces her. Stacey cries
into Tonya's shoulder.

TONYA

When did it happen?

STACEY

Last week.

TONYA

After you emailed me about the
dream?

STACEY

(nods)

Mmhmm.

TONYA

(with remorse)

I'm so sorry, Stacey...

STACEY

(bitter)

Don't be. I only got what I wanted,
right?

Taken aback and unsure of the answer herself, Tonya is
unsure of how to reply to Stacey's question. The two sit in
chairs across from each other.

STACEY

I've lost my child... And now I
might even lose my husband. I feel
like my whole life has spiraled out
of control... It's weird how things
work out... You try so hard to hold
something together, And it all just
falls apart...

TONYA

(cautious)

Stace...I know that right now it must feel like the whole world is crumbling around you. But you can go on. God wants you to go on--

STACEY

(angry)

If God wants me to go on, why did He take away my baby?

TONYA

What makes you think that this is any fault of God's? The Bible says He is the Blessor and Provider. He gives life. It's the devil who comes to steal, kill and destroy, you know that.

STACEY

You're right; all of this is just probably my punishment. Those stupid pills are known to cause miscarriages--

TONYA

Stace, God wanted you to have that baby more than anyone else.

STACEY

(breaking down)

I know what that dream meant. It was all of the babies I've already killed. I've already killed so many--

TONYA

(calm, but blunt)

Listen! God wasn't trying to rob you of this blessing, only Satan would want to do that.

STACEY

(looks at Tonya, in tears)

What are you talking about?

TONYA

Only God knows what that child could've grown up to do or become. But that scares the enemy. Because he can't stand the idea of anyone or anything getting in the way of his plans to deceive the world.

STACEY

It's not like I'm some spiritual warrior, Tonya.

TONYA

But you could've been. How many plans did the Lord have for you before you first saw your mother stumble into the apartment drunk? Before you first watched her pull the landlord into her bedroom? Before she...before she was shot? How many plans did He have for you, before you made your own?

Stacey doesn't have an answer.

TONYA

I remember the spark in your eyes the day you came to stay with my family. I had never seen such bitterness and determination in a 16-year-old.

STACEY

I was just so...disgusted. She couldn't control her hormones or stay focused in school. And once she finally did stay focused enough to hold a job, she still lacked control everywhere else. She couldn't even keep herself alive for her kid... What kind of idiot holds on to waitressing tips at gunpoint? And I had to make a decision, to let my life end up the same way, or make it turn out right.

TONYA

Do you feel like you've been successful?

Stacey once again is lost for words.

TONYA

You see, the problem in your mother's life wasn't so much her lack of control. It was the fact that she didn't trust God enough to let *Him* be in control. Even once she did take charge, she didn't trust God with the rent, she didn't

(MORE)

TONYA (cont'd)
even trust Him to provide her with
one decent job so that she could
spend time with you. But if she'd
trusted in Him, she could've been
lead to better people, better
situations, and a happier ending.

Stacey reflects on what Tonya is saying.

TONYA
(shrugs)
I wanted to control how much money
I made in high school. I decided to
try petty theft to get some extra
cash for a car I wanted. When I got
in too deep, I prayed for a way out
and the Lord pulled me out just
before my friends got busted... But
when I went through it, I found my
faith in the Lord and turned all
control over to Him. Even how many
children I have... God can turn
anything around for His good,
Stace. If no other good could've
possibly come out of your mother or
that baby's life, if it just guides
one person down the right path, it
makes all the difference.

Stacey thinks for a moment about what Tonya has said. She
only sees one wise decision at this point.

STACEY
(nervous)
Can you... Pray with me?

TONYA
It would be an honor.

Tonya and Stacey hold hands to pray.

INT. BAKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Later that evening. Stacey enters the bedroom where Bryon is
just finishing fixing the window.

BRYON
There.

Bryon shuts the window and the whistle stops, never returning. Stacey is in awe. Shocked, she smiles at him in amazement. But he still appears upset about their earlier conversation.

BRYON
(indifferent, but still upset)
Oh, hey. Where did Tonya go?

STACEY
She went to grab dinner for all of us. She'll be back soon.

BRYON
(nods)
Oh.
(clears throat)

Stacey approaches Bryon cautiously.

STACEY
I'm sorry...

Bryon looks into Stacey's eyes for the truth in silence.

STACEY
I'm sorry for shutting you out, and acting as if your feelings didn't matter. But I'm really sorry, for just being so selfish... I guess, I've just spent so many years taking care of myself, when it was time to let someone else take care of me, I didn't trust them to follow through. And I definitely didn't know anything about taking care of others.

BRYON
Stacey, I know that life hasn't been the best for you, and it's made you want the world. And I'm going to do my best to give that to you. But I need you to understand that I can only give you that: My best.

STACEY
(nods)
I know.

BRYON

And I'm sorry too. I had no right to accuse you like I did out there. I was just as scared about this whole thing when we found out we were pregnant. I desperately wanted to protect and provide for the two of you. And I felt incapable of doing either one without a job...

STACEY

(caressing Bryon's face)
It's okay honey, I understand.

BRYON

I was just starting to feel like I didn't have control over much of anything anymore...

STACEY

(chuckles)
Hmph... Yeah, we need to talk about that...

INT. BAKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

3 months later. Bryon sits anxiously on the bed in the bedroom as a cooking timer ticks. Stacey is in the bathroom.

BRYON

(calling out)
We have to hurry cause I don't wanna be late again like last week.

Stacey rushes out of the bathroom.

STACEY

I know, I know... But I'm itching to know if I'm pregnant.

BRYON

(jokingly)
You really couldn't wait until tomorrow?

STACEY

You said I could take the test whenever I wanted!

BRYON

(sarcastic)
Yeah, what a perfect moment: Just before church.

The timer continues to tick. The phone rings and Stacey quickly answers.

STACEY
Hey.... No not yet, I just set the
timer.

Bryon leans forward realizing Tonya is on the other end of the line.

BRYON
(disbelief)
You told her?!

STACEY
(whispers into the phone)
I'll call you right back! I
promise!

Stacey hangs up the phone.

BRYON
You two are truly incredible.

STACEY
You know I tell Tonya everything.

Stacey sits next to Bryon on the bed.

BRYON
(aside)
That's the part that worries me...

STACEY
(nudging Bryon)
Oh hush.

The timer continues to tick.

BRYON
So...You nervous?

STACEY
A little. But I know that when God
says it's time, it's time. He can
prepare us for anything.

BRYON
Right. And we agreed, no matter
what, we'll trust God on this.

STACEY

Right.

(breathes)

No matter what... God is in
control.

The timer ticks a little while longer.

CLOSE ON STACEY AND BRYON NERVOUSLY WAITING ON THE BED.

CUT TO BLACK.

The timer dings.

THE END